

AGN. NO.

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

July 9, 2013

Support for President Obama's Proposal to Increase Investments in Early Childhood Education and Universal Preschool

Investing in early learning during the first five years of a child's life has significant consequences for a child's long-term health, social, emotional, educational, and cognitive outcomes. Research demonstrates that brain development begins prior to birth and advances at a rapid rate through the age of three. During the preschool years, children not only develop core academic knowledge in reading, writing, math, and science, but they develop critically important learning skills, such as paying attention, managing emotions, and completing tasks. However, one study cites that public investments in early learning fail to correspond to the period in which the most rapid rate of brain growth is taking place: ages 0-5. The inability to recognize the need from a public policy perspective to adequately address the micro world of early education can have a deleterious effect on efforts to impact macro public policy issues such as crime, unemployment, grade retention and educational attainment, and the overall economy. Among developed countries the United States ranks 25th in public

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MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
July 9, 2013
PAGE 2

spending for early learning.

Over the last several years, awareness of the importance of early learning programs has grown. Data shows that early care and education is vital to the nation's future sustainability and the development of a competitive and educated workforce.

The Obama Administration has recently proposed a plan for improving access to quality preschool, infant-toddler care and home visitation services. Nationwide, the plan would invest \$75 billion over 10 years to serve more children in quality early learning services and an additional \$750 million to help states improve the quality of their services. A recent analysis of the plan projected that California could receive up to \$335 million in new federal preschool funding during the first year of the plan's implementation. In addition, the plan calls for state matching funds and allows states to build on their existing investments instead of creating new programs.

The proposed plan is under consideration by the United States Congress and therefore action by the Board of Supervisors is timely and appropriate. It is in the strong interest of the Board to support President Obama's plan to increase funding for preschool and early childhood education.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1) Instruct the County's Legislative Advocates in Washington, D.C. to take all appropriate actions to support the passage of President Obama's plan to increase investments in universal preschool and early childhood education.

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

July 9, 2013

PAGE 3

2) Direct the Chief Executive Officer and the County's Legislative Advocates in Washington, D.C. to transmit a five-signature letter stating the Board's support to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Majority Leader of the Senate, the Minority Leader of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, and to each Senator and Representative serving Los Angeles County in the Congress of the United States. The letter shall state the Board's support for the President's early learning plan and encourage these policy makers to ensure flexibility so that local preschool programs can implement a federally-supported preschool expansion plan.

3) Direct the Chief Executive Officer and the County's Legislative Advocates in Sacramento to transmit a five-signature letter stating the Board's support to the Governor of California, Senate President pro Tempore, Speaker of the Assembly, and to each Senator and member of the State Assembly serving Los Angeles County in the California State Legislature. The letter shall encourage these policy makers to support the President's plan, to voice their support to their federal representatives and to begin the planning process so that California is best positioned to qualify for this potential funding.

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